



# House of Representatives

General Assembly

**File No. 702**

*January Session, 2007*

House Bill No. 6893

*House of Representatives, May 2, 2007*

The Committee on Appropriations reported through REP. MERRILL of the 54th Dist., Chairperson of the Committee on the part of the House, that the bill ought to pass.

***AN ACT CONCERNING EXPANDED OUTREACH AND  
COMMUNICATION ACTIVITIES BY THE CHOICES HEALTH  
INSURANCE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM.***

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

1 Section 1. Subsection (b) of section 17b-427 of the general statutes is  
2 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July*  
3 *1, 2007*):

4 (b) The Department of Social Services shall administer the  
5 CHOICES health insurance assistance program, which shall be a  
6 comprehensive Medicare advocacy program that provides assistance  
7 to Connecticut residents who are Medicare beneficiaries. The program  
8 shall: (1) Maintain a toll-free telephone number to provide advice and  
9 information on Medicare benefits, including prescription drug benefits  
10 available through the Medicare Part D program, the Medicare appeals  
11 process, [and other] health insurance matters applicable to Medicare  
12 beneficiaries and long-term care options available in the state at least  
13 five days per week during normal business hours; (2) provide

14 information, advice and representation, where appropriate, concerning  
15 the Medicare appeals process, by a qualified attorney or paralegal at  
16 least five days per week during normal business hours; (3) prepare and  
17 distribute written materials to Medicare beneficiaries, their families,  
18 senior citizens and organizations regarding Medicare benefits,  
19 including prescription drug benefits available through the Medicare  
20 Part D program and long-term care options available in the state; (4)  
21 develop and distribute a Connecticut Medicare consumers guide, after  
22 consultation with the Insurance Commissioner and other organizations  
23 involved in servicing, representing or advocating for Medicare  
24 beneficiaries, which shall be available to any individual, upon request,  
25 and shall include: (A) Information permitting beneficiaries to compare  
26 their options for delivery of Medicare services; (B) information  
27 concerning the Medicare plans available to beneficiaries, including the  
28 traditional Medicare fee-for-service plan, Medicare Part D plans and  
29 the benefits and services available through each plan; (C) information  
30 concerning the procedure to appeal a denial of care and the procedure  
31 to request an expedited appeal of a denial of care; (D) information  
32 concerning private insurance policies and federal and state-funded  
33 programs that are available to supplement Medicare coverage for  
34 beneficiaries; (E) a worksheet for beneficiaries to use to evaluate the  
35 various plans, including Medicare Part D programs; and (F) any other  
36 information the program deems relevant to beneficiaries; [and] (5)  
37 collaborate with other state agencies and entities in the development of  
38 consumer-oriented websites that provide information on Medicare  
39 plans, including Medicare Part D plans, and long-term care options  
40 that are available in the state; and (6) include any functions the  
41 department deems necessary to conform to federal grant requirements.

42 Sec. 2. Section 17b-367 of the general statutes is repealed and the  
43 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2007*):

44 The Office of Policy and Management, within existing budgetary  
45 resources and in consultation with the Select Committee on Aging, the  
46 Commission on Aging, personnel designated by the Commissioner of  
47 Social Services who administer the CHOICES health insurance

48 assistance program and the Long-Term Care Advisory Council, shall  
49 develop a single consumer-oriented Internet website that provides  
50 comprehensive information on long-term care options that are  
51 available in Connecticut. The website shall also include direct links  
52 and referral information regarding long-term care resources, including  
53 private and nonprofit organizations offering advice, counseling and  
54 legal services.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	<i>July 1, 2007</i>	17b-427(b)
Sec. 2	<i>July 1, 2007</i>	17b-367

Section 1	<i>July 1, 2007</i>	17b-427(b)
Sec. 2	<i>July 1, 2007</i>	17b-367

**HS**            *Joint Favorable C/R*

APP

**APP**            *Joint Favorable*

The following fiscal impact statement and bill analysis are prepared for the benefit of members of the General Assembly, solely for the purpose of information, summarization, and explanation, and do not represent the intent of the General Assembly or either chamber thereof for any purpose:

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**OFA Fiscal Note****State Impact:**

Agency Affected	Fund-Effect	FY 08 \$	FY 09 \$
Department of Social Services	GF - Cost	Potential Minimal	Potential Minimal

**Municipal Impact:** None

**Explanation**

This bill clarifies and expands the responsibilities of the CHOICES program in the Department of Social Services (DSS). The expansions (concerning availability of information about Medicare Part D and long term care) are already a part of the current practice of the CHOICES program. It is not clear whether the specifications in the bill will require DSS to expand CHOICES' current scope of practice. If so, an additional administrative cost will result.

**The Out Years**

The annualized ongoing fiscal impact identified above would continue into the future subject to inflation.

**OLR Bill Analysis****HB 6893*****AN ACT CONCERNING EXPANDED OUTREACH AND  
COMMUNICATION ACTIVITIES BY THE CHOICES HEALTH  
INSURANCE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM.*****SUMMARY:**

This bill expands the statutory role of the Department of Social Services' CHOICES health insurance assistance program in disseminating information (including preparing and distributing written material) and providing advice to Medicare beneficiaries to specifically include the federal Medicare Part D prescription drug program and long-term care options in the state. The bill includes the Medicare Part D program in the list of Medicare-related information that must be included in the Connecticut Medicare consumer guide. CHOICES currently develops and distributes this guide, in consultation with the insurance commissioner and other organizations.

The bill also requires CHOICES to collaborate with other state agencies and entities in developing consumer-oriented websites that provide information on Medicare plans, including Medicare Part D plans and available long-term care options. It adds CHOICES personnel designated by the social services commissioner to the group charged with developing the state's long-term care website, which began operating in 2006. (The other entities are the Office of Policy and Management, the Select Committee on Aging, the Commission on Aging, and the Long-term Care Advisory Council.)

CHOICES stands for "Connecticut's program for Health insurance assistance, Outreach, Information and referral, Counseling, and Eligibility Screening."

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2007

**COMMITTEE ACTION**

Human Services Committee

Joint Favorable Change of Reference

Yea 17 Nay 0 (03/20/2007)

Appropriations Committee

Joint Favorable

Yea 48 Nay 0 (04/19/2007)